

*Report to the P-20 Council
January 26, 2011*



GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE P – 20 SUBCOMMITTEE ON DATA AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction

For more than a decade the Illinois Learning Standards have been the foundation of K-12 Education. In recent years policy makers have sought to expand “Illinois education” to develop a seamless system that includes pre-kindergarten, post-secondary education and graduate school.

As we begin a new decade of P-20 education with the Common Core Standards as its foundation, we must strive to transform, not merely reform, teaching and learning in Illinois. The goal is to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Such transformation requires a new accountability system, based on a new robust assessment system that provides innovative assessments of learning and *for* learning and generates usable, meaningful data that will improve instruction and student learning.

Our subcommittee is proud to present these guiding principles and recommendations to inform the development of this new system.

What is at the Heart of the Problem?

“... in examining the secondary standards, curriculum, and assessments in Massachusetts, California, and Texas, we discovered that it was not the standards or even the curricula that drove teachers and schools nuts, it was the tests. The tests did NOT measure the standards, particularly the higher order ones, well or even at all. And they certainly did not do justice to the curriculum.”

- David Pearson, 2010

Two Different Kinds of Authentic Assessment

**High-Inference
Assessment – Used for Accountability**

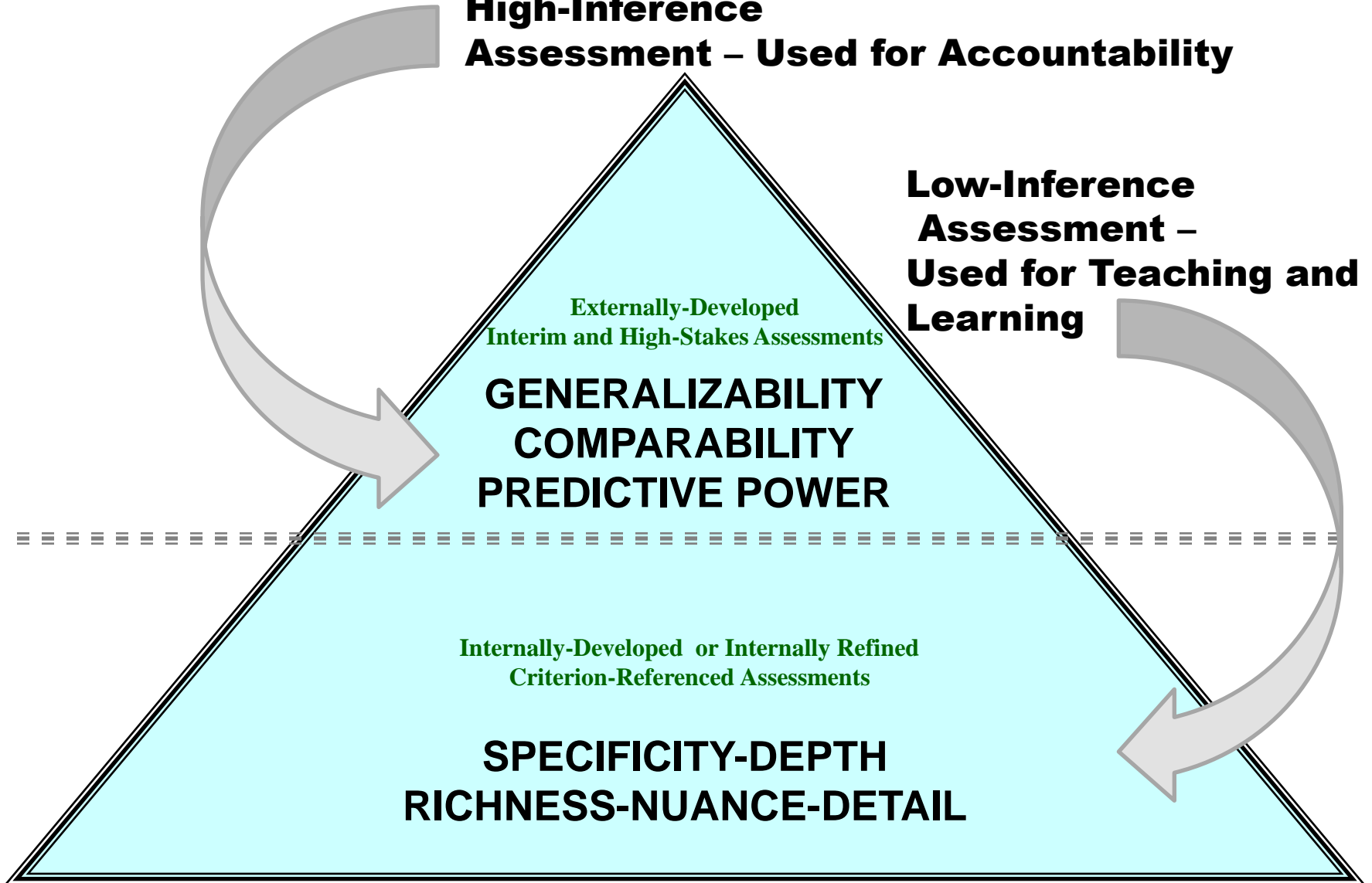
**Low-Inference
Assessment –
Used for Teaching and
Learning**

Externally-Developed
Interim and High-Stakes Assessments

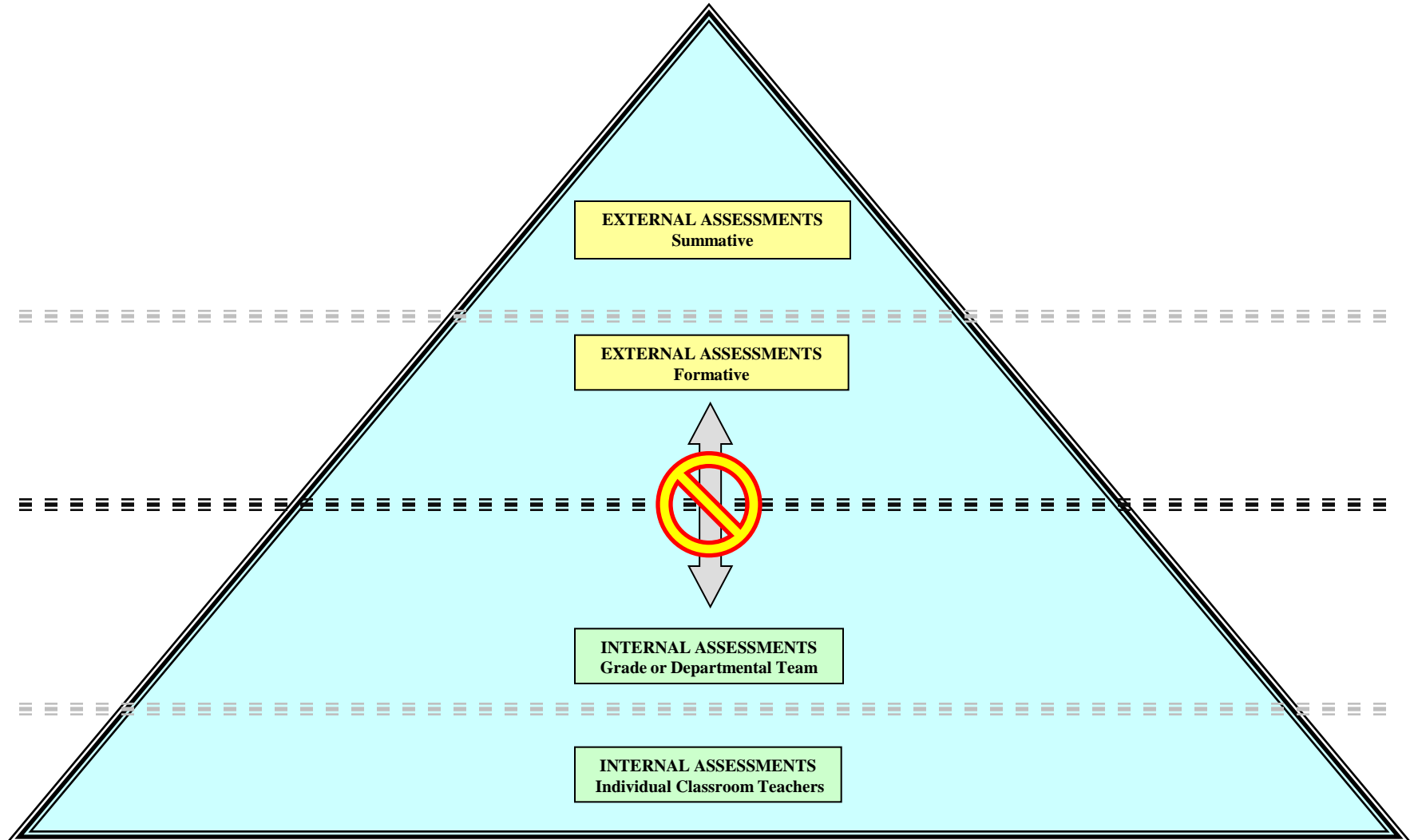
**GENERALIZABILITY
COMPARABILITY
PREDICTIVE POWER**

Internally-Developed or Internally Refined
Criterion-Referenced Assessments

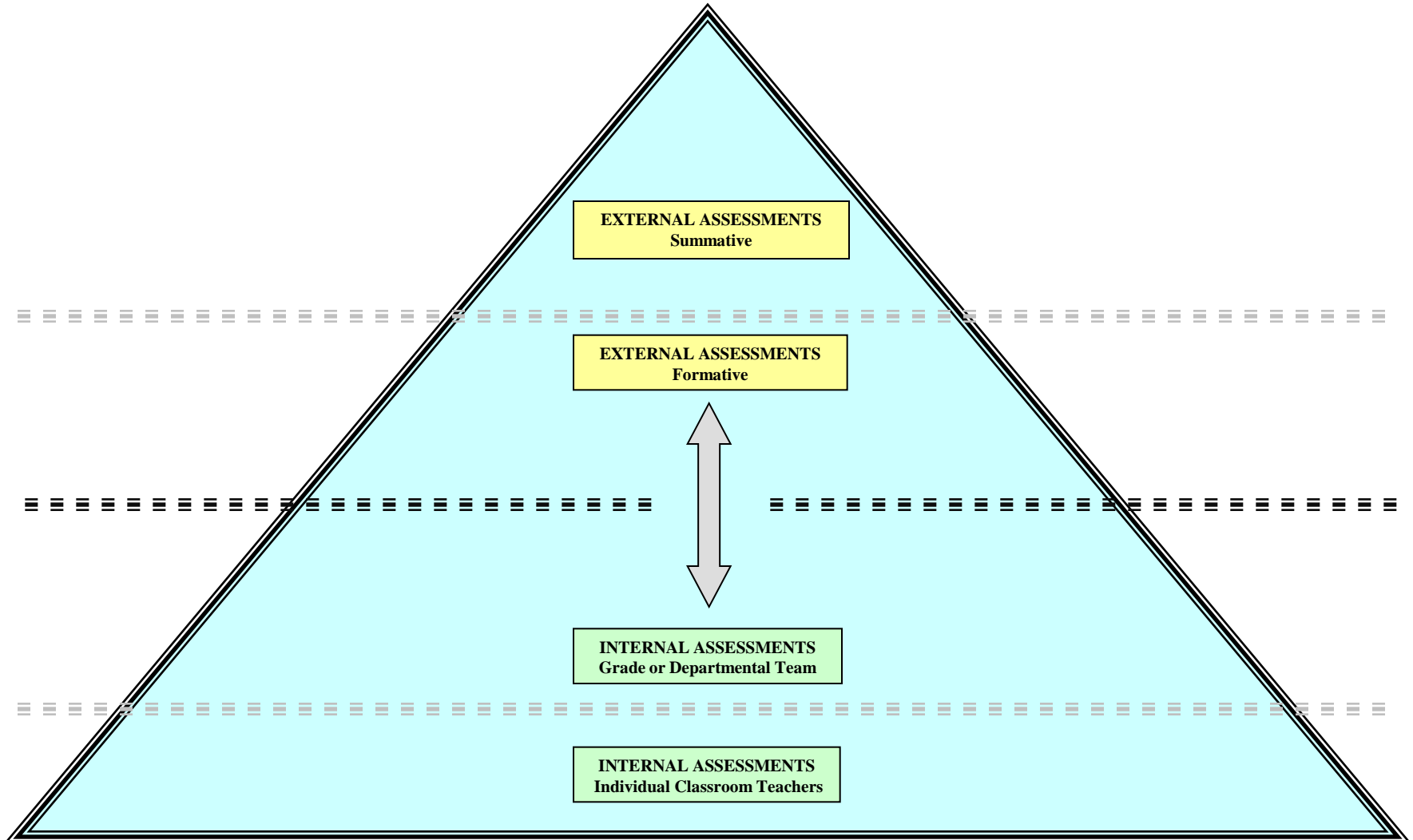
**SPECIFICITY-DEPTH
RICHNESS-NUANCE-DETAIL**



Where We Are Now



Where We Need to Be



The State of State Accountability

The Fact:

The current Illinois State Assessments consist of the ISAT, which is administered annually in grades 3 through 8 and the PSAE given at grade 11.

The Challenge:

Public concern exists about:

- The underrepresentation of rigorous test items within and across grade levels,
- The lack of consistent cut scores from year to year,
- The lack of linking between elementary and high school assessments, and
- The lack of performance items requiring students to demonstrate 21st century skills (see slide 7 for more detail).

The State of State Accountability

The Fact:

The current Illinois State Assessments are based largely on conventional norm-referenced items that are coded after-the-fact to reflect Illinois Learning Standards and the Illinois Assessment Framework.

The Challenge:

Illinois assessment reports do not yet reflect the content of the Common Core Standards in English or Mathematics, which ISBE has adopted, and mastery and knowledge and skills students will need for success in the 21st century.

The State of State Accountability

The Fact:

The current State Accountability System is primarily designed to identify failing, improving and successful schools.

The Challenge:

The existing system for reporting data provides little, if any, guidance about either how to raise the bar of curricular and instructional expectations or how to improve instruction and student achievement at the classroom, school and district levels.

The State of State Accountability

The Fact:

The Illinois State Report Card reports school-level results in four proficiency categories for AYP sub-groups. It also summarizes attendance and other student information as well as data about district finances, teacher experience, qualifications and salary.

The Challenge:

The current Report Card does not provide:

- meaningful or useful information about student growth
- school-level financial data
- teacher characteristics
- comparative information with respect to similar schools
- information about a school's learning environment.

The State of State Accountability

The Fact:

The primary accountability mechanism for reporting information to the public is the School Report Card.

The Challenge:

The School Report Card:

- is not widely read or readily accessible to the public
- is not presented in a format that is useful or easily understood
- does not provide the public information regarding student achievement prior to grade 3, for grades 9 and 10, or after grade 11.
- does not contain data that enable stakeholders to determine the condition of--or trends in--the effectiveness and efficiency of their pre-school programs, schools, districts, community colleges, or universities.

Guiding Principles

1. Illinois must develop and adopt an accountability system that provides reports which enable educators, parents, students, researchers, and taxpayers to easily compare achievement, financial, and school climate data from schools, districts and institutions of higher education.
2. The accountability system should be based on an assessment model designed to inform, guide, and improve teaching and student learning. This system should promote the development of 21st century skills needed for success to attain college and career readiness. These skills include:
 - a) The ability to form relevant questions that will lead to the solution of challenging problems
 - b) The ability to work in collaborative teams to solve problems
 - c) The ability to access/analyze/synthesize information
 - d) The ability to effectively communicate in oral and written form
 - e) The ability to adapt and use new technologies
3. The accountability system should include standard state-wide processes that allow students, educators, and parents the opportunity to share their perception of the district/school climate in relation to its impact on student learning and captures financial data that provides a clear picture of per-pupil expenditures.
4. The accountability system should include a data system that allows for simplified collection and analysis across schools, districts, institutions and agencies, which avoids duplication of effort and reduces administrative burdens.

Recommendations to Agencies on Standards and Assessments

- The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) should review and revise the current Illinois Learning Standards in relation to the Common Core Standards and the knowledge and skills students will need for the 21st century:
 - The ability to ask relevant questions in order to solve problems
 - The ability to work in collaborative teams to solve problems
 - The ability to access/analyze/synthesize information
 - The ability to effectively communicate in oral and written forms
 - The ability to adapt and use new technologies
- ISBE in cooperation and consultation with the Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and P-20 Council should develop a definition of college and career readiness and use the revised Standards to back map a “ladder” of benchmarks that are critical for each grade level.
- ISBE, in cooperation and consultation with IBHE and P-20 Council, should review both assessment items and existing grading and reporting system for the ISAT and PSAE, and any other state developed assessments to ensure that they align closely with the guiding principles outlined above.

Recommendations to Agencies on Standards and Assessments

- The assessment system should clearly provide and distinguish between the two types of assessment:
 - Assessment of knowledge that can be meaningfully assessed using scaled annual and interim items;
 - Assessment of knowledge that can be meaningfully assessed at classroom, grade, and/or department level.
- ISBE, IBHE, and the P-20 Council should lead the nation in developing pioneering performance assessment items that are aligned with the revised Illinois Learning Standards and the 21st Century Skills.
- With the assistance of educators, ISBE should provide exemplars of performance based assessment items, student work samples, rubrics, and resource materials (including videos and web based products) that educators can use to model and assess the revised standards and the 21st century knowledge and skills at the district, school, and classroom levels.

Recommendations on Accountability to Illinois General Assembly

- The Illinois Legislature should make changes to the Illinois State Report Card to:
 - include results from parent, student, and teacher climate surveys for use in improving school climate and conditions for teaching and learning;
 - include areas of achievement, financial, demographic, and survey data which can be compared across comparable demographic sub-groups, schools and districts.
- The Illinois Legislature must generate and allocate funding to support the transformation of the State Accountability System.

Recommendations for Educators and the Public on the Meaning and Use of Data

- ISBE should develop and implement a plan for high-quality public and professional learning focused on:
 - Examining student work in relation to attaining the revised state standards
 - Assisting in the development and evaluation of performance based assessment items in relation to the revised state, district/school, and classroom assessment
 - Deepening the assessment literacy of educators to enable better use of state and local data to improve teaching and student learning
 - Identifying gaps in the State Data System and creating a work plan to fill them.
- State and local education agencies should develop or amend their technology and research and development strategies to assure all stakeholders can readily access and use significant data sources including the Longitudinal Data System, Learning and Performance Management System, IlliniCloud, Illinois Interactive Report Card and local district data initiatives.

Appendix

Requirements for Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles

1. Illinois must develop and adopt an accountability system that provides reports which enable educators, parents, students, researchers, and taxpayers to easily compare achievement, financial, and school climate data from schools, districts and institutions of higher education.
2. The accountability system should include an assessment model designed to inform, guide, and improve teaching and student learning. This system should promote the development of 21st century skills needed for success to attain college and career readiness. These skills include:
 - a) The ability to form good questions that will lead to the solution of challenging problems
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 - d) The ability to effectively communicate in oral and written form
 - e) The ability to adapt and use new technologies
3. The accountability system should include standard state-wide processes that allow students, educators, and parents the opportunity to share their perception of the district/school climate in relation to its impact on student learning and captures financial data that provides a clear picture of per-pupil expenditures.
4. The accountability system should include a data system that allows for simplified collection and analysis across schools, districts, institutions and agencies, which avoids duplication of effort and reduces administrative burdens.

Guiding Principles

1. Illinois must develop and adopt an accountability system that provides reports which enable educators, parents, students, researchers, and taxpayers to easily compare achievement, financial, and school climate data from schools, districts and institutions of higher education.

Requirements:

- a) The State Report Card needs to provide better guidance-for how to interpret the data it presents—both what the data mean and do not mean, so as to avoid misinterpretation and counterproductive use of the data.
- b) The student assessment system should continue to be the basis for school and district accountability. Statewide norms as well as “criterion-referenced” data should be used to define accountability standards.
- c) The student assessment system must reflect a balance of growth measures and proficiency measures. Holding schools to unattainable proficiency measures is unfair to students and schools; however, measuring only growth without meaningful proficiency goals is equally unfair.
- d) The K-12 accountability system must be internally consistent and anchored to meaningful measures of college and career readiness.
- e) Schools need accurate pictures of individual and group achievement compared to similar schools, statewide averages and comparable student sub-groups in order to identify ways they can improve teaching and learning.
- f) Demographics and financial resources are critical elements to the needs and success of schools. Accurate profiles of school level finances and teacher characteristics (e.g. experience, degrees earned) and the particular needs of students provide a more complete picture of what should be expected and what must be supported.
- g) The report card needs to provide information about the conditions for teaching and learning that can support improvement as well as data about student learning outcomes.

Guiding Principles

2. The accountability system should include an assessment model designed to inform, guide, and improve teaching and student learning. This system should promote the development of 21st century skills needed for success to attain college and career readiness. These skills include:
 - The ability to form good questions that will lead to the solution of challenging problems
 - The ability to work in collaborative teams to solve problems
 - The ability to access/analyze/synthesize information
 - The ability to effectively communicate in oral and written form
 - The ability to adapt and use new technologies

Requirements:

- a) The assessment and accountability system must set clear expectations for achievement from PK through 20, that back-map grade-level benchmarks from college and career outcomes and that allow all stakeholders to see where students stand in relation to those benchmarks
- b) The state should develop a system that measures and reports student growth for both summative accountability and formative and curriculum embedded assessment, in particular for those subjects that do not have summative tests.
- c) The state should develop an infrastructure to provide teachers and students with richer range of assessment opportunities. These opportunities should allow students to create and produce products and make presentations that demonstrate their ability to integrate their new knowledge with existing knowledge to solve problems.
- d) Richer and more complex performance assessment requires meaningful opportunities and support for district and school-level personnel to develop and score assessment items and evaluate other forms of student performance.
- e) The state should exploit technology wherever possible to ~~an~~ provide richer assessment opportunities for formative and summative purposes.
- f) Assessment changes must be part of a broader strategic plan informing, assisting, and guiding educators in implementing changes.

Guiding Principles

3. The accountability system should include standard state-wide processes that allow students, educators, and parents the opportunity to share their perception of the district/school climate in relation to its impact on student learning and captures financial data that provides a clear picture of per-pupil expenditures.

Requirements:

- a) A learning environment survey that provides diagnostic information about instructional leadership, professional support, community relations, issues such as student safety, and quality of instruction.
- b) The survey should be standard across Illinois allowing district to capture a picture of how they compare to other schools and districts.
- c) Data from this survey should not be part of the formal accountability process, but should be reported publicly and used for continuous improvement.
- d) Financial data should be collected so that it can be easily aggregated and analyzed
- e) Data should be collected to the appropriate institutional level, for example spending on schools should be linked to schools as opposed to districts.

Guiding Principles

4. The accountability system should include a data system that allows for simplified collection and analysis across schools, districts, institutions and agencies, which avoids duplication of effort and reduces administrative burdens.

Requirements:

- a) The state should continue to develop a longitudinal data system that connects data across agencies.
- b) The quality of the system is highly dependent of the quality of data collected from districts and higher education institutions. With steadily increasing amounts of data available, the state must ensure that data collection processes can handle future needs.
- c) The state must ensure that data reaches educators to support instructional improvement at all levels of the system. School, district, higher education and state systems must be closely aligned.
- d) Districts, higher education institutions and private and public businesses are developing technologically innovative ways to access, analyze, display and use data. The state should develop processes to incorporate similar innovations.

Respectfully Submitted

Co-Chair: Max McGee, Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy

Co-Chair: Robin Steans, Advance Illinois

Ben Boer, Advance Illinois

Michael Dunn, Independent Consultant

Ellen Fogelberg, Evanston District 65

Dan Harris, Ounce of Prevention

Joyce Karon, former member ISBE

Jennifer Koran, SIU Carbondale

Cordelia Meyer, Civic Committee of the Commercial Club

Sandeep Nain, SNTial

Cynthia Plouche, Williams Capital Management

Diana Rauner, the Ounce of Prevention Fund

John Rico, Rico Enterprises

Paul Zavitkovsky, UIC

Joyce Zurkowski, ISBE